TWIN CITY LINES

Fall 2022

About 1930, a westbound Como-Harriet car boards passengers on Como Avenue at 18th Avenue SE in Minneapolis.

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The Minnesota Streetcar Museum operates the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line in Minneapolis and the Excelsior Streetcar Line in Excelsior. Its mission is to preserve Minnesota's electric railway heritage.

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How frequent was the Como-Harriet?

-Aaron Isaacs

During the last couple of years we've acquired a number of TCRT pocket timetables, thanks to Dave French's EBay searches. This has finally given us a better idea of the actual frequency of service on the different streetcar lines. Although we operate a small piece of the original Como-Harriet line, we couldn't tell our visitors how often it ran.

Now we can, thanks to recently acquired pocket timetables from March 31, 1952. The Como-Harriet was a 24/7 operation, with hourly owl cars all night. There were separate Como-Harriet timetables for Minneapolis and St. Paul. In addition, we also have a timetable for the Oak-Harriet line. It shared the CHSL tracks from Dinkytown to Linden Hills. Trips on the two lines alternated to provide a more frequent service between those points.

Half of the Como-Harriet trips from south Minneapolis terminated downtown. The rest continued to downtown St. Paul. The result was different frequencies on different parts of the two lines. There were separate schedules for weekdays, Saturdays and Sundays. We'll walk through each one, starting from the St. Paul end of the line.

Weekdays

From downtown St. Paul to 15th Avenue SE and 4th Street in Dinkytown, the weekday midday frequency was every 20 minutes. Rush hour service was more frequent, but we don't know exactly how much. All the timetables just say more service during rush hours, without listing the exact trips. It was probably every 5-10 minutes within St. Paul. There were almost certainly rush hour trips added from Como and Eustis to downtown Minneapolis.

The Como-Harriet shared tracks with other lines, creating a higher frequency for short trips in and near downtown. Between downtown St. Paul and Rice Street, it shared tracks with the University Avenue line, the Rice Street line, the Hamline line and the Western Avenue line.

The Snelling Avenue line shared the Como Avenue tracks for a quarter mile from Snelling to Pascal. During the State Fair the line became much busier with Fair specials from all over the system.

The Inter-Campus line shared the Como Avenue tracks from Eustis Street to Dinkytown, but the Inter-Campus operated separately from the rest of the streetcar system. It had a different fare and no transfers were issued. It only made a couple of stops on Como Avenue, so it can't be considered to supplement the Como-Harriet line.

At Dinkytown, the Como-Harriet was joined by the Oak-Harriet. Both ran every 20 minutes in the midday, but alternated trips to create a uniform 10 minute headway (headway is the transit term for frequency) from Dinkytown to Hennepin and Washington in downtown. It should be noted that the portion of the Oak-Harriet in southeast Minneapolis had no overnight owl service.

From the Old St. Anthony neighborhood at East Hennepin and 4th Street through downtown to the Hennepin-Lyndale bottleneck, the track was shared with the Bryant-Johnson line, which also ran every 10 minutes.

The Como-Harriet and Oak-Harriet weren't alone on Hennepin Avenue. Prior to 1940, the Bryn Mawr line used Hennepin to 12th Street, the Kenwood line to Douglas Avenue and the St. Louis Park line all the way to Lagoon Avenue in Uptown. Until 1932, the Lake Minnetonka and Deephaven lines shared the Como-Harriet track all the way to Edina. On weekdays that meant a Lake Minnetonka car every 30 minutes and a Deephaven car once an hour.

From Hennepin and 1st Street to Linden Hills, the Como-Harriet headway increased from 20 minutes to 10 minutes, thanks to short turn cars that started downtown. Add in the Oak-Harriet cars and a typical midday hour leaving Washington Avenue looked like this, with cars alternating every 5 minutes, then every 10 minutes.

10:02 Como-Harriet
10:07 Oak-Harriet
10:12 Como
10:22 Como
10:27 Oak
10:32 Como
10:42 Como
10:47 Oak
10:52 Como

So how much busier was the rush hour? Bill Olsen, who was a high school streetcar conductor during World War II, wrote that the rush hour cars ran every 30 seconds. Ridership and service both declined after the war. Ed Nelson's load check taken on June 18, 1954, the very last day of service, shows a car every 2-3 minutes during the morning rush hour. Afternoon rush hours were always heavier than the mornings, so service at least every

Front cover: What's that bus doing next to the 44th and France streetcar loop? It's the shuttle to 54th and France, implemented in 1952 when the Village of Edina tore up the track on their side of France Avenue (the city limits) with no advance notice to Twin City Rapid Transit. It capped off a decade of conflict between Edina and the streetcar company. See page 4 for the whole story.

Headed for downtown St. Paul, an eastbound car curves under Lexington Avenue and pulls into the Como Park station. John Stern photo.

two minutes seems likely. That would have been split about equally between Como-Harriet and Oak-Harriet cars, about every 4 minutes for each line.

Once past Lake Harriet, the lines began to diverge and tracking the frequencies becomes more complicated. The Oak-Harriet line left the Como-Harriet tracks at Xerxes Avenue. With it went the 20 minute midday frequency and half of the 2-minute rush hour. Most Oak-Harriet cars terminated at 50th and Penn, but some rush hour cars, signed Oak-Xerxes, shortlined at the 50th and Xerxes wye to prevent overcrowding 50th and Penn.

The Como-Harriet cars had a choice of three terminals. Some rush hour trippers ended at the 44th and France loop. Of those that turned onto France Avenue, half terminated at the 51st and France wye and half continued to 54th Street. The line was single track south of the 51st Street wye, so shortlining at 51st prevented congestion on the single track. The midday headway was 10 minutes to 51st Street, 20 minutes to 54th.

But there was an exception. Some cars continued out the main line to Hopkins during the rush hours and evenings. They carried a Como-Hopkins destination sign. Beginning in the 1930s, the midday Hopkins cars began running as a shuttle between Hopkins and the 44th and France loop, where they met the regular car to downtown. These meets were scheduled and shown in the public timetable. Outbound Como-Harriet cars scheduled to feed the Hopkins shuttle carried a wood dash sign saying so.

The Hopkins line was cut back to Brookside Avenue in Edina in 1951. Thereafter, one Como-Harriet car each hour terminated at the Brookside loop, more often during the rush hour.

Weekends

The Saturday and Sunday schedules resembled the weekdays, but without the rush hour peaks. However, on Saturdays the Oak-Harriet ran every 10 minutes instead of every 20 minutes as on weekdays. Combined with the Como-Harriet's 10-minute service, this created a 5 minute headway south of downtown.

On Sundays both lines ran every 20 minutes from end to end, combining to create a 10-minute headway.

The fight over France Avenue

To reduce its construction cost, TCRT only built a single track on the extreme outer ends of some lines. This was based on the assumption that a streetcar would reach the end of the line, take its layover and clear the single track before the next car was scheduled to arrive.

The following lines ended in single track:

South St. Paul
East 4th Street
Maria
Jackson Street
Western Avenue
Stryker Avenue
Dale Street
Columbia Heights
Bryn Mawr
Cedar Avenue
Bryant-Penn
St. Louis Park
Como-Harriet

Where the double track narrowed to a single track, TCRT placed signals to tell the following car to not enter the single track if it was occupied. This created some delays, but the Como-Harriet on France Avenue from 49th Street to 54th Street was the worst. Delayed streetcars led to a war between the streetcar company and the Edina police.

Here's the chronology. In 1925 TCRT opened the France Avenue branch as single track from 44th Street to 50th Street, ending in a wye at 50th. A sec-

Above: From 1925 until 1934, streetcars wyed out at 50th and France. That disrupted traffic, so the wye was moved south to 51st Street. However, single track starting at 50th often prevented streetcars from reaching the 51st wye, and that backed up traffic on France, creating the conflict with Edina police officers. Hennepin County Library collection.

Left: The solution was to extend the double track to the 51st Street wye (seen diverging at right), and that happened in 1947.

ond track was built from 44th to just north of 50th in 1929, and the single track was extended to 54th Street.

Wying the cars at 50th Street, which was then Highway 169, proved to be a problem, so in 1934 the wye was moved to 51st Street. All was well and good until the dramatic increase in streetcar frequency during World War II. Streetcars couldn't enter the single track to reach the wye at 51st Street because the signal just north of 50th indicated the track was occupied. Southbound streetcars began waiting north of 50th for the single track to clear and that caused a traffic backup. Rather than working with TCRT to find a solution, the Edina police began ticketing motormen. The dispute played out in the papers as follows.

11-25-43

Como-Harriet line crews will not be permitted to take cars beyond 44th Street and France Avenue S. after Thursday noon unless protection is guaranteed by the company from reported "harassment" by Edina police, a union official warned Wednesday night. H. C. Wick, assistant business manager of Street Railway union #1005, said Edina police had persisted in blaming streetcar men for traffic tie ups on the run from 44th Street to the end of the line at 54th Street, and especially on the single track from 51st to 54th Streets.

Motormen also had been "bawled out," Wick said, by police on the way they parked their cars on the wye at 54th Street. "We've been taking their abuse for two years and something has to be done about it by Thursday noon or our men will take the cars no farther than 44th Street", he said. D. J. Strouse, president of the company, said he had not been appraised of the situation or of the threat to halt service.

Above: The completed double track, looking north from 51st Street. Minneapolis Public Works collection.
Below left: The Studebaker is pulling out of the 51st Street wye. The streetcar at right is waiting to back into the wye. The streetcar at left started at 54th Street. Note how the track is shifting from the street's centerline to the northbound lane.
Below right: This is the single track south of 51st Street. Star-Tribune photos, Minnesota Historical Society collection.

11-25-43

A temporary truce was arrived at between Edina village officials and Street Railway union #1005. The truce guaranteed streetcar service through to 54th Street until 8pm Monday when the village council will hold a special meeting to investigate reported "abuses" of streetcar operators by the village police.

Just last night, it was reported, a policeman boarded a streetcar, told the motorman he was going to give him a ticket, then threatened to take him off the car. When the conductor interfered verbally, the policeman allegedly shoved him into a seat.

John Lyon, Edina chief of police, termed the flareup of minor importance, and said it probably was due to the exaggerated stories of one streetcar crew. That, however, was not the attitude of union official H. C. Wick. "The situation has got to the point where we've got to have a showdown," Wick said. "Certain men have been picked on all the time by Edina police, and they're not, as some suggest, the

younger men in the service who might not be too familiar with the routine. They're fellows who have been on the cars a long time."

All sides agreed the traffic situation is difficult because of a narrow street and the fact there is only a single track beyond 50th Street. Police officers were told to "lay off" streetcar operators until the points of disagreement could be aired at the meeting Monday.

11-26-43

An Edina village official hinted the Edina police chief might be suspended Monday night as a result of rows with streetcar motormen. The dispute was of long standing, arising out of the fact that southbound streetcars frequently had to wait at 50th and France while northbound cars cleared the one-way track. During the waiting, motorists occasionally were stymied behind the cars, since France is too narrow to accommodate a waiting streetcar, a row of parked automobiles, and a stream of moving cars.

Wednesday night came the latest

Left: This is why Edina tore up the track. TCRT was supposed to pave the track area at its expense and didn't have the money to do it. We're looking north from 54th Street with the wye in the foreground. Note the signal on the pole at right. It told the motorman if the track was clear or occupied. All Star-Tribune photos, Minnesota Historical Society collection.

Bottom left: More bad pavement on France Avenue at 46th Street.

Bottom right: The very last streetcar heads south. The Edina crew will remove the track immediately. The track at right is in Minneapolis and won't be touched, but the line will still be closed.

It's 1954, shortly before the end of streetcar service at the 44th and France loop. A Mack bus in the old 2-tone green colors is on the France shuttle. Tom Hanson photo.

"incident" when, the union alleged, Edina Police Chief John Lyon bawled out a waiting motorman at 50th Street, then followed the car up to 51st Street, where it backed into the wye to turn around, and renewed his remonstrances. Said the union, the conductor approached while the policeman was in the midst of his harangue, and was shoved into a seat and advised to keep out of the argument. This was despite the fact the car was resting at the moment on the wye tracks that undeniably are inside Minneapolis city limits and outside the confines of Edina.

This conflict led to one of the last track extensions in TCRT history. In 1947 the double track was extended to the wye at 51st Street.

That may have solved the traffic backup, but the City of Edina was still unhappy because TCRT didn't repair the track area pavement as required under the city franchis. On August 11, 1952, without prior notice, Edina city crews began tearing up the track on their side of France Avenue. Thereafter streetcars were shortlined at the 44th and France loop and shuttle buses completed the trip to 54th Street.

Duluth Street Railway's operating economies

-B. G. Noah

As the 1920s drew to a close, the Duluth Street Railway was in financial trouble. Ridership had been dropping for a decade, and the Twin Ports were already a tougher place to run streetcars than the Twin Cities, due to much lower population density. DSR economized where it could, as described in this 1931 article by General Manager B. G. Noah.

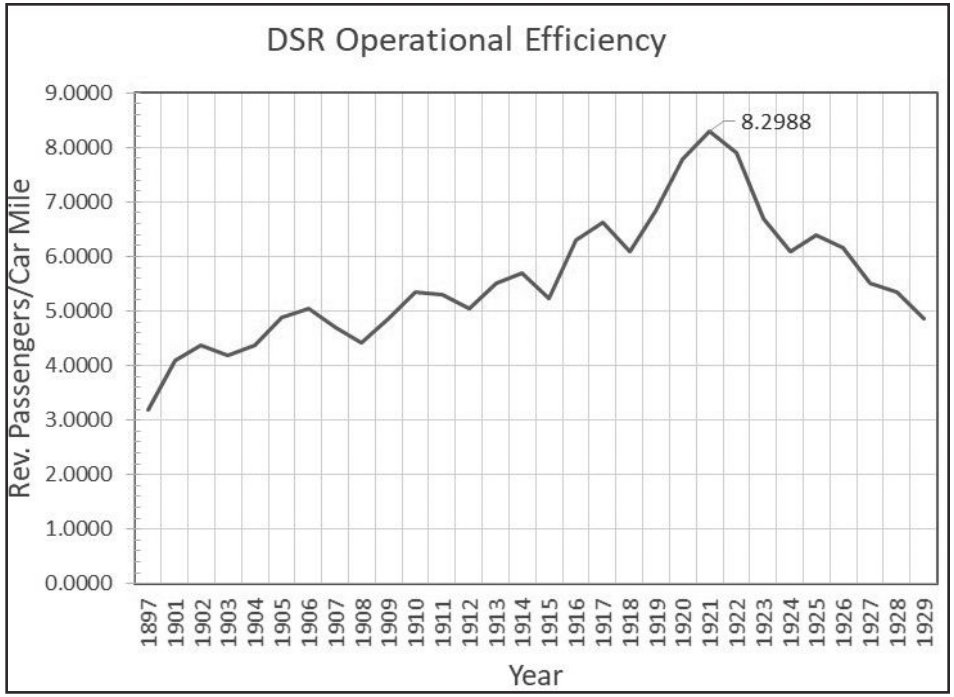
With the persistent decrease in revenues, which has accompanied the growth in the general use of the private automobile, the practice of most rigid economy by public transportation managements has become a vital necessity. The prime purpose back of the practice of economy in any industry, is to reduce the cost of production to a minimum without reducing the quality of the product, and the transportation industry is no exception to this rule.

Before any plan for increase in efficiency is adopted, a careful analysis should be made to determine its effect on the quality of the product which, in our business, is service. Practices which result in a lower cost per car mile of operation but at the same time result in a corresponding loss in revenue due to a reduction in the quality of service, obviously is not economy.

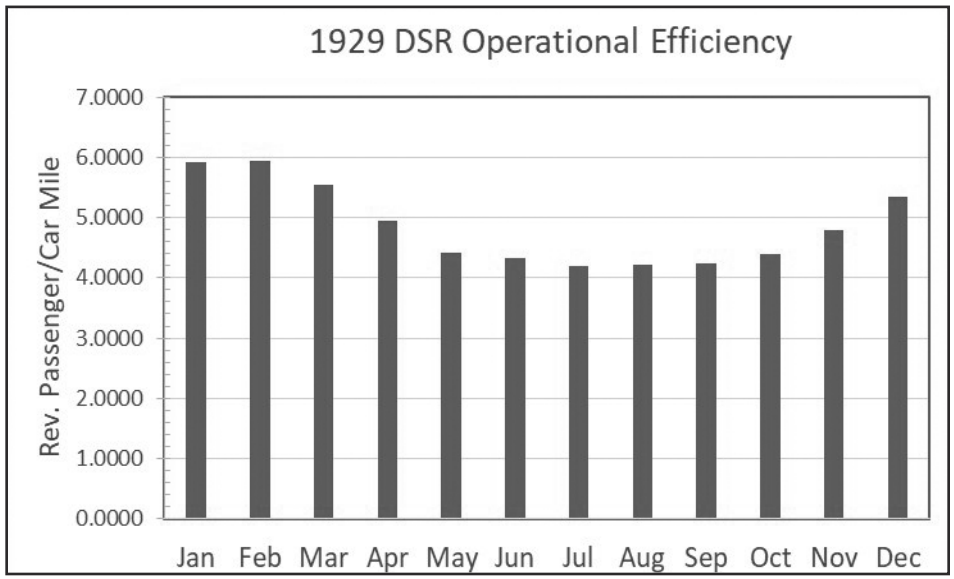
The adoption of the one-man car in the medium-sized and smaller cities has made it possible to maintain relatively close headways and a high standard of service despite the continued decrease in revenues. This has been a real accomplishment in the practice of economy.

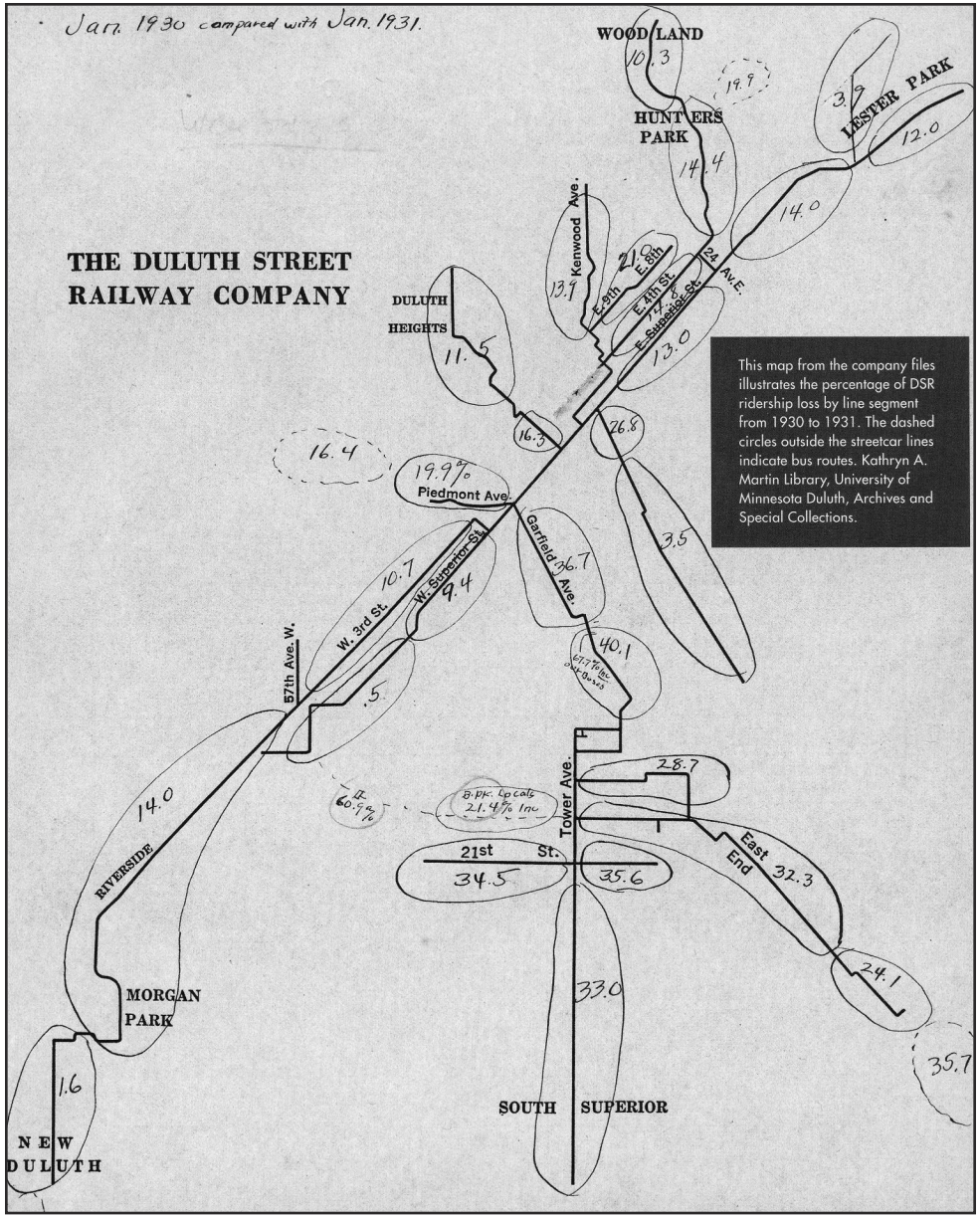
In 1928 The Duluth Street Railway Company started a program of changing car equipment for one-man operation. This program was completed in 1930 and 100% of the operation is now by one-man cars. The cars were equipped with safety devices and pneumatically operated front and rear doors and furnished with comfortable

Conversion to one-man operation changed the face of Duluth's Twin City-built standard cars. It's unclear why the addition of double front entrance doors resulted in an asymmetrical front end, which didn't happen in Minneapolis-St. Paul.



Above: Here's the story of ridership on the Duluth-Superior system. By 1929 the company was headed for bankruptcy.
Below: Ridership was highly seasonal, which hurt the company's profitability. Many people drove during the summer, then parked their cars and rode in the winter.
Right:The Great Depression caused a major reduction in ridership. This map from company files shows the percentage loss from 1930 to 1931 by route segment.





leather seats. In the maintenance of car equipment we have adopted a system of rigid inspection on a mileage basis. This system of inspection, together with the general use of high quality materials and renewal parts, improved methods and a high standard of workmanship, has resulted in increasing the car miles of operation per pull-in to four times the mileage prior to the adoption of these methods.

Experience has shown that the use

of the best quality of materials the market affords, will result in a lower cost of maintenance and a higher standard of service by reducing the number of failures of equipment while in service. We keep posted, before our shop and carhouse crews, graphs showing the average miles per pull-in by months due to the several classes of failures and a graph showing the average miles per pull-in for all classes of failures. These graphs are closely watched by the maintenance crews and have resulted in a friendly rivalry between groups responsible for different classes of work.

In the painting of cars we find that the cost of labor is approximately 85% of the total cost of the job and for that reason a real economy can be effected by using the best quality of paint obtainable.

The proper arrangement of track layout at car stations is an important element in the practice of economy. An arrangement which provides for ease in shifting equipment for inspection, repairs and cleaning will result in a substantial saving and smooth operation of this routine work.

We have been able to effect some economy in the use of power by a course of instructions to car operators in the proper handling of the controller. The cars are not equipped with meters by which the individual operators can be graded. In lieu of this, we post before the operators each month a graph showing the power consumption per car mile for each division and as in the case of maintenance crews, these graphs have created a rivalry which keeps the matter of power economy in the minds of the operators at all times.

In the matter of schedule-making, we have increased the schedule speed between termini from 11.38 miles per hour in 1928, with two-man operation, to 13.10 miles per hour in 1931, with one-man operation. This increase in schedule speed has resulted from a careful analysis of the traffic and operating conditions on each line and the whole-hearted cooperation of our operators. The adoption of improved braking equipment and the use of treadle exit rear doors has contributed to this increase in speed. We find, however, that it would be impossible to make any further increases in schedule speed without affecting the quality of service. Due to the length of our lines and the character of the passenger traffic, our basic headways are necessarily longer than would be practical in more compact and closely built-up cities. With these longer headways, it is necessary to arrange schedules so that operators will not be disposed to pass up prospective passengers who are a few seconds late in arriving at stopping places.

The use of automatic headway recorders has resulted in a lower cost of supervision of car operation and an improvement in the spacing of the service.

In order to realize the greatest possible benefit from the adoption of any economy practice, it is essential that the best industrial relations exist between the management and the employees. When employees are kept in close touch with the trend of business and informed in the general policy of the management, it will be found that they are willing and anxious to cooperate to the fullest extent. They come to realize that they are essentially a part of the business. About a year ago our car operators and maintenance men, on their own initiative, started a campaign to increase the riding habit by improving the service through courtesy. Their efforts have done much to improve public relations. The campaign which they carried on last spring against the repeal of municipal jitney ordinance, is an outstanding example of what can be accomplished by good industrial relationship.

In the matter of accident prevention, we are conducting a safety contest between individual car operators. A cash prize is awarded to each man who goes for 12 months without a chargeable accident and the amount of the award is doubled if his record is unbroken for a period of 24 months. Safety meetings are held regularly and the men are instructed in safety methods and given an opportunity to bring before the meetings suggestions for improvement in accident prevention work. We feel that this work has been very effective and largely responsible for our Company winning the Anthony N. Brady Memorial Gold Medal for our accident record in the year 1929. The miles operated per accident have steadily increased from 2,830 in 1928 to 4,650 in 1931.

The substitution of bus service for rail service on light lines will result in a substantial saving in operating costs and in most cases result in better service to the public than was possible with rail operation. This is particularly true where the rail service abandoned was over single track lines with the usual waiting of cars at turnouts. During the past year we have abandoned rail operation over approximately 12.5- miles of track and substituted gas bus service over the greater part of these routes.

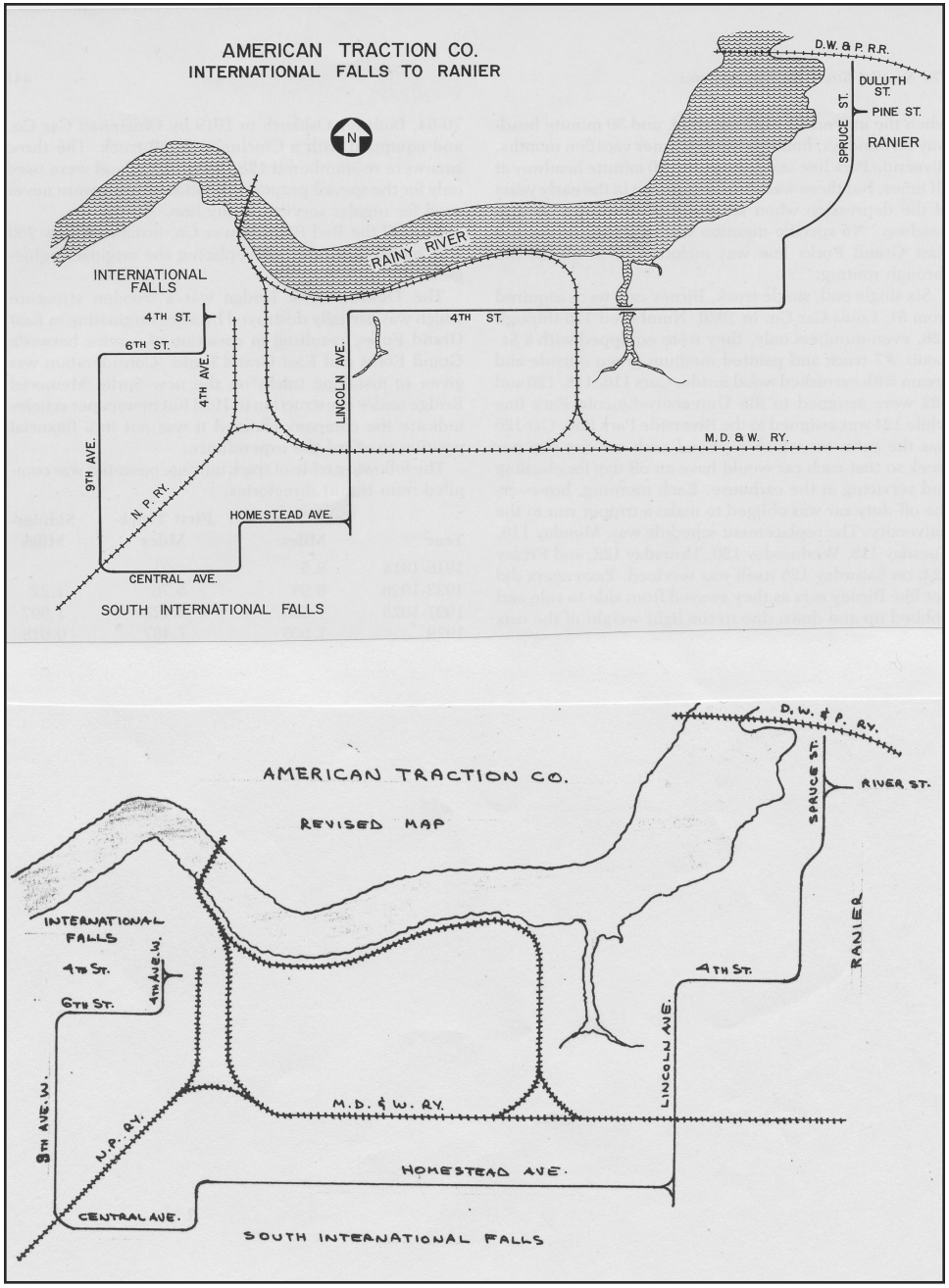
We are at present making our first trolley bus installation over 1.5-miles of street at the extreme end of one of our lines. This trolley bus installation will take the place of the present rail operation and is the initial step in a plan whereby trolley "buses will replace street cars on approximately 7 miles of street extending from the easterly end of Duluth to the downtown business section of the city. The necessity for large expenditures in track renewal on this line, was the controlling factor in deciding to substitute the trolley bus at this time.

There has never been a time in the history of the local transportation business when the demand for economy in operation has been greater than at the present time. The methods by which this can he accomplished vary with the local conditions and the problem can be solved only through a thorough study of all of the possibilities. The purpose is the same in every case however, and should include the maintaining of the physical property in a high state of operating efficiency and the maintaining of the best possible service to the end that it will attract new business and hold its place as a vital necessity to the growth and prosperity of the community it serves.

American Traction Company

-Russell Olson

International Falls developed into an early lumbering center. Its 1910 population was 1,487 persons. During 1909 a group of Iowa and South Dakota bankers formed the American Suburbs Company to promote the sale of real estate. A bank was established in nearby Ranier (population 190) to facilitate the promotion. A subsidiary, American Tramways Company, was incorporated In South Dakota during 1903 to construct a street railway connecting the Duluth, Winnipeg & Pacific Ry. depot in Ranier with the Northern Pacific Ry. depot in International Falls. Necessary franchises were obtained during 1910 and



The top map shows the line as originally built., although not all details may be correct. The bottom map shows it relocated south of the MD&W tracks.

These postcards from 1912 show one of the gas powered cars at the Ranier end of the line, probably right after it opened. It's not clear why the photos are marked "I. P. & I. Co.

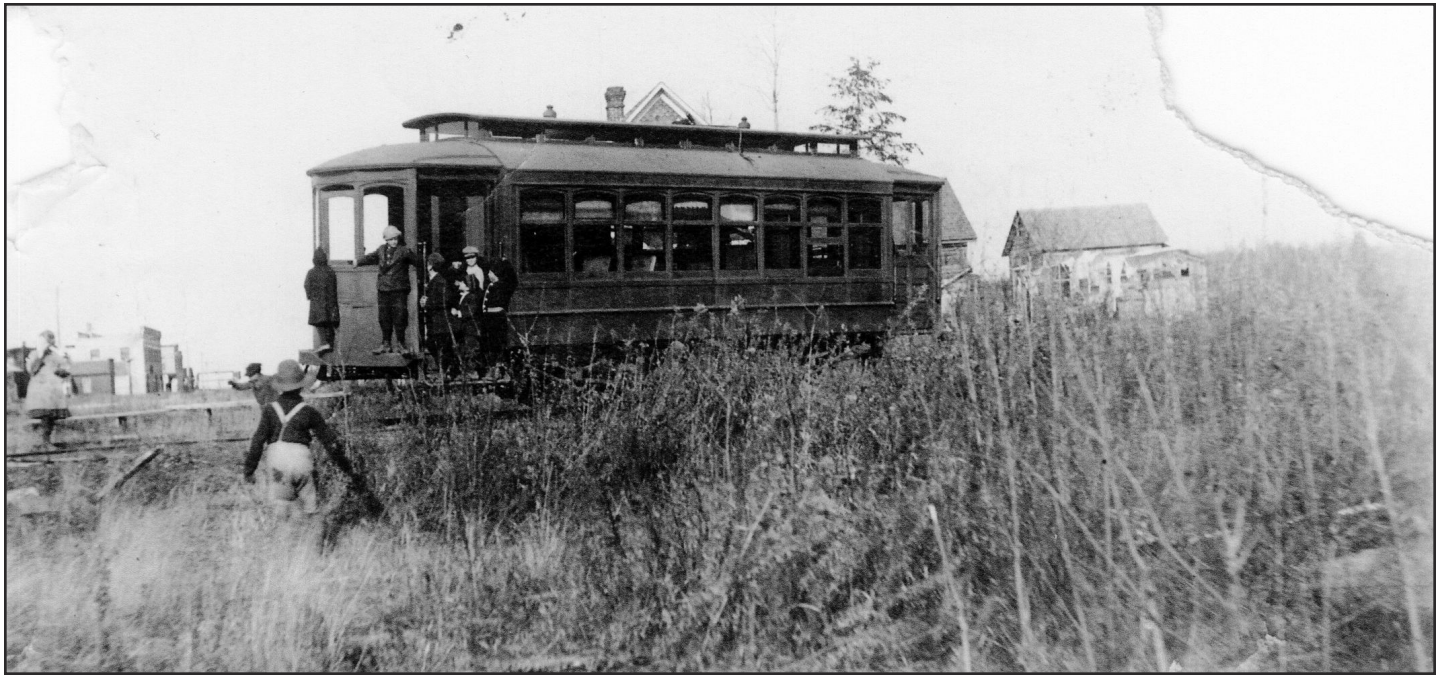
in November of that year it was announced that the line would probably use Edison storage battery cars.

Construction began in Ranier with the intention of building directly into International Falls on 4th Street. However when track laying began within the city limits of International Falls during June 1911 and near the Minnesota & Ontario Paper Co. sawmill, the company was taken into court. The E. W. Backus interests, International Lumber Co., sued on the grounds that construction of the track would interfere with the sawmill operations and pose a hazard crossing the Minnesota, Dakota & Western Ry. yards further west on 4th Street.

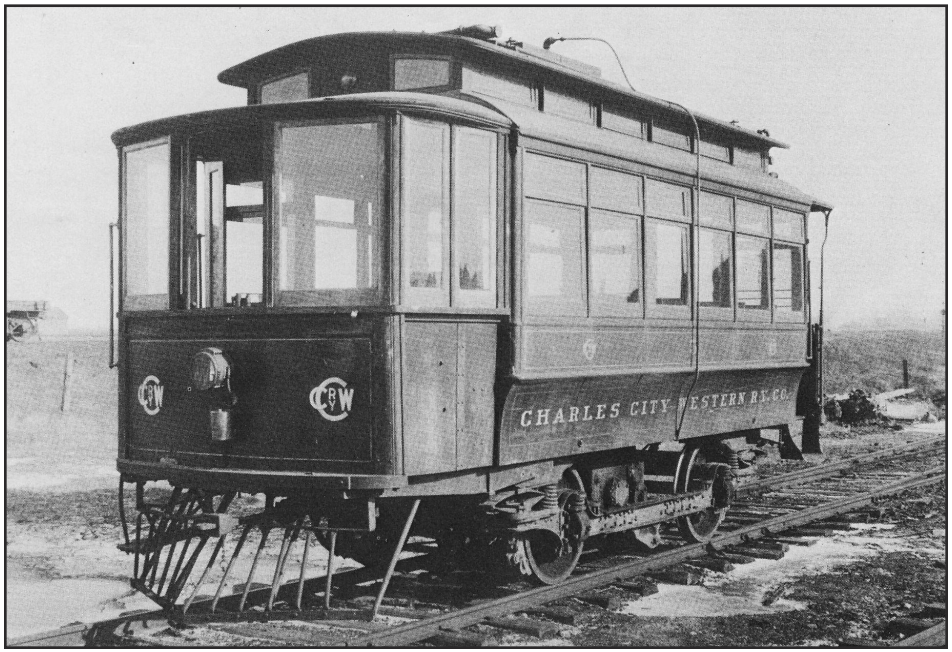
The first car arrived in July 1911. A newspaper photograph shows it to be a gasoline-mechanical car with semi-convertible body.

Meanwhile the court case became complicated and eventually ended in the Minnesota Supreme Court. The final verdict was that while the objections to the line were not completely valid, there were a number of careless errors in the original franchises granted by the respective towns to the car line company. One of these errors was that the company was given the right to operate both passenger and freight service in contradiction to a Minnesota law prohibiting a street railway from performing freight operations. After this irregularity and others were revealed by the court in August 1912 a new company appeared on the scene seeking the franchises.

This company, American Traction Company, was also a real estate promotion adjunct. It was organized by L. H. Nord, an International Falls resident, in cooperation with L. L. Enger, Minneapolis, both jointly involved in the International Falls Realty Co. It was incorporated in Maine during

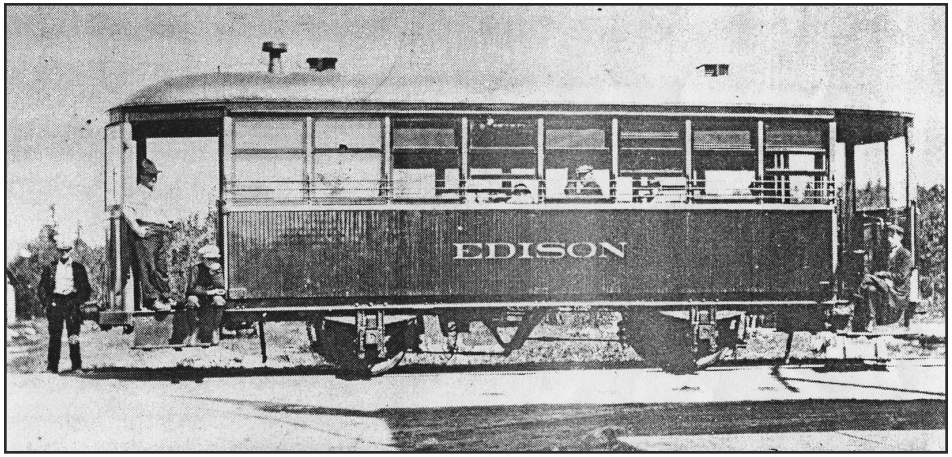


Above: Another view of one of the gas cars with kids climbing on the bumper. Koochiching County Historical Society collection.
Below: The company bought one of these gas cars from the Charles City Western in 1916. It was unreliable and was put up for sale after a short time.



September 1912 and authorized to do business in Minnesota during December 1912. A. L. Sorter, Minneapolis, became president of the company in 1913. During January 1913 the company, friendly with the Backus interests, received the proper franchises and in July of that year purchased all the property and rights of the American Suburbs Co. and American Tramways Co. With regard to the car line this involved 5.50 miles of track and one passenger car.

Compare the two maps. The top one shows the original American Tramways route that crossed the MD&W twice. The bottom map shows the revised new route that relocated the long stretch on 4th Street south to Homestead Avenue (now 17th Avenue). The advantage of this new



Two views of the Edison battery car. The above photo was captioned "Sometimes it works". Both Koochiching County Historical Society collection.

route was that it served more residences and only crossed the MD&W once. The disadvantage was that it was not competitive with the direct International Falls-Ranier service provided by boats and "buses".

Construction of the relocated line proceeded slowly, so slowly that the first operation did not take place until September 20, 1916, over the 6.75 miles of track which had been inspected by the Minnesota Railroad & Warehouse Commission that same day. A carhouse was built at the Ranier wye.

A gasoline-mechanical car had been purchased in May 1916 from the Charles City Western Ry., Charles City, Iowa. This car was CCW #5. It had been built by St. Louis Car Co. in 1892 as one of five 24 ft. closed trailers (numbers 1-5) far the Fort Clark St. Ry., Peoria, Illinois, which was subsequently acquired by the Peoria Railway. The five trailers were acquired by the CCW in July 1910 retaining the same numbers. They were all rebuilt to gasoline-mechanical cars by the CCW Ry. #5 received a Hart-Parr 30 h.p. gasoline engine in the process.

One real estate investor moved to International Falls as a result of his purchase. He reported lots were offered at $500 each, some of which were under water as much of the line ran through swampland. He considered the gasoline-mechanical car as "a pile of old junk". (These cars were considered a total "flop" on the CCW.)

One new storage battery car was acquired from the Railway Storage Battery Co. of Silver Lake, New Jersey. Edison alkaline nickel-iron batteries were used. This car arrived July 3, 1917. The investor previously mentioned reported that the batteries had to be recharged after each trip.

The company announced they expected to add a seventh round trip within a short time. Additional cars would be put on and more numerous trips made as the patronage increased.

George R. Wiar of Ranier was the local manager and conductor, with Ray Holler as motorman. Later in 1917 R. B. Kook, an International Falls merchant, was appointed general manager. The local newspaper reported in December 1917 that the company was having trouble recharging the streetcar batteries. Apparently the Ranier power plant was inadequate to handle the winter power load of the community plus recharging the car's batteries.

The July 1918 McGraw Electric Railway List contained information with a reporting date of December 1917. It said the line connected International Falls, South International Falls, Ranier and St. Francis, Ontario. with 6.75 miles of track. On the roster were two gasoline cars, one Edison storage battery car and nine other cars.

A timetable printed in the 2-7-1918 newspaper shows these trips.

Lv Ranier		Lv Intl Falls
1:45 a.m.	(meets the Duluth train)	2:15 a.m.
8:15 a.m.		9:30 a.m.
11:30 a.m.		1:00 p.m.
2:15 p.m.		3:30 p.m.
5:10 p.m.	(meets the Duluth train)	6:15 p.m.
7:30 p.m.		10:00 p.m.

An elderly resident recalled that when he returned to International Falls from World War I military service in the fall of 1918 the line had already stopped running. The Minnesota Railroad & Warehouse Commission records indicate an International Falls Street & Interurban Ry. was operating the line in 1920, but other records in their files list the line as being abandoned about 1919 or 1920.

One carbody was sold and used for several years for an unstated purpose near the Ranier wye. The carhouse was moved to the river front for use as a boat house. It was still there in the mid 1980's although considerably altered over the years.

Streetcars and Lake Harriet in the early days

Historic newspaper stories are a window into the streetcar system's operation. Here are three stories about early streetcars at Lake Harriet. Remember that until 1902, Twin City Rapid Transit held the Lake Harriet entertainment concession and built the lake pavilions.

It's a busy summer day at Lake Harriet about 1892. The second pavilion on the lakeshore is still pretty new. Single truck streetcars are pulling trailers to handle the loads. Note that the track is at the lower level of the current parkway. It would later be raised to the level of Queen Avenue, where the people in the foreground are.

July 5, 1893

Lake Harriet was the mecca for the greatest crowd that has ever visited it, for aside from the people who had gone there to picnic and who remained until night, an immense crowd from both this city and St. Paul had been gradually gathered at the lake all through the day, and when sundown came the cars were so packed with humanity that the only way to secure a seat was to board a car going the opposite direction, pay two fares, and thus get to the lake in the center of a crowd that was all an electric car could stagger under.

Downtown streets were packed with people anxious to get to the lake, Hennepin Avenue near the transfer station and Nicollet at Washington Avenue being the scenes for hurrying crowds eager to get even a foothold on the steps of the cars. The result was when it came time to give the pyrotechnic display, there was such a crowd within the enclosure at Lake Harriet as that lake has never seen. The crowd was so dense that it was impossible to get within sight of the display, and those who came last were compelled to be satisfied with the aerial flight of rockets and the bursting of bombs. However good the display might have been, it was forgotten in the scenes that followed, when some 15,000 people began the trip back to the city.

That the crowds were good-natured was fortunate, or things might have been serious. Some people began to see that there might be trouble in getting home early, so as early as 9 o'clock a crowd gathered at the exit gates, which for some reason were shut. The crowd soon became dense, and as the gates still remained closed people pressed toward the front, until several women fainted, and then a number of the men put their shoulders to the gates and opened a way to let those out who wished to retire. Other portions of the crowd hastened toward the end of the fences, a few fence slats were broken and soon the crowd invaded the tracks and filled the cars in waiting to overflowing. For some reason the cars did not move. It was learned afterward that there was trouble with the power. The crowds had tracked sand deep over the track, and when the power was turned on the cars could hardly be moved over some portions of it.

People piled on top of the cars and so loaded them down that the wheels scraped upon the bottom of the cars. At. 10:15 a Hennepin Avenue car moved slowly away, with an immense crowd, the people aboard cheering. The load was so heavy that the driver was obliged to reverse in order to stop it when necessary, and this frightened the occupants, as the machinery made

some noise. When part way toward town a rough place of track was struck, and the roof began to cave in, there was yelling and the roof was cleared of its occupants. This car reached Washington Avenue at 11:45.

Still there was little diminution of the crowd at the lake, and hundreds walked into town. Steps were broken from cars and people still crowded on. It was long past midnight before the last car left the lake.

Hundreds of people who started for the lake about 8 o'clock failed to get there. Scores of cars reached 31st Street and the bend near Calhoun, and the demands on the power became so great that it was insufficient to move the cars. A general blockade followed. People, giving up the attempt to reach Harriet as hopeless, took a returning car and at a crawling pace returned to the city.

A car going out the 1st Avenue line was so heavily loaded that its wheels scraped on the car bottom, and when it reached 11th Street the hind wheel of the trailer broke, the car went from the track and was forced toward the center so that its corner struck the pole that holds the wire and demolished it as well as the front of the car. The wires dropped to the car, there was a shower of sparks, several screams, and the people piled from the car as fast as possible.

A Hennepin Avenue motor went in its proper course, but the trailer started toward Bryant Avenue, and there was another delay.

At 2:30 a. m. the cars were still running and the majority of the people succeeded in getting a berth in the last trains. Many slept at the lake in the grass, others remained at the pavilion, and still others found sleeping places at neighboring houses.

People who went to Lake Harriet last night will long remember the 4th of July of the year 1893.

May 4, 1900

Changes at the lake

The improvements at Lake Harriet are being rushed with such energy that in all probability the season at this popular resort will be formally opened Sunday May 13.

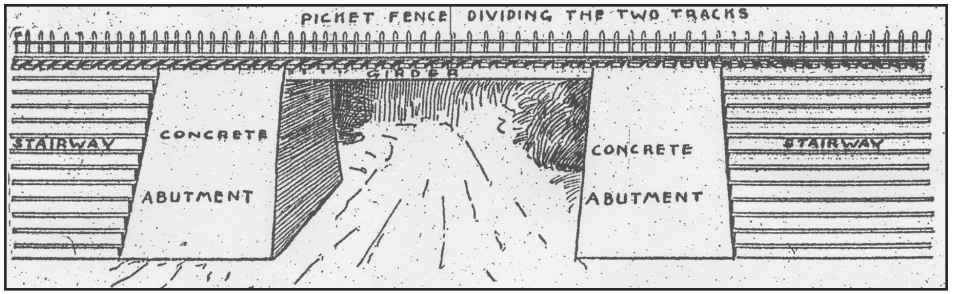
The Twin City Rapid Transit Company commenced the lowering of its tracks from the cemetery to the lake three weeks ago and during that time has had between 150 and 200 men employed on the work.

The lowering of the tracks is to accommodate the Park Board. The board will make several changes in the driveway between Lake Calhoun and Lake Harriet. The course of the driveway will be about 100 feet north from the old road, and a new bridge will be built. This bridge will cost $6900, and be of artistic proportions.

While the Twin City Rapid Transit Company hopes to be able to accommodate its patrons in ten days, the park drive will not be open to the public until June 1, at the earliest. The old bridge has been torn down, and those who wish to drive to the lake now are compelled to take the old road to the top of the hill, and then turn in to Cottagewood and make a roundabout trip.

The work the street railway company is having done means a great improvement to the district, but it is being done at a great expense. The trackage is affected a distance of a mile, and is being lowered six feet.

At the lake terminal a great improvement will be made. The old station has been torn down, and will be replaced by a modern structure. The old building led the passengers up and over the tracks, but the new station will work just the opposite. The passengers will make their way from the cars to the lake front through a subway. The lay of the ground will not necessitate this being extended any considerable distance. The sub-way will be well-lighted and of sufficient width to accommodate the passing to and from of any number of people.



Above: This newspaper illustration attempted to show the new Lake Harriet. pedestrian underpass.

Below: While there are plenty of photos that look toward the lakeside pavilions, this is the only one that partially shows the pedestrian underpass at far left. Taken about 1904, it looks the same as it does today. Minnesota Historical Society collection.

St. Paul Pioneer Press, July 19, 1901

TCRT employed a single person to manage the Lake Harriet concessions as well as Wildwood Park on White Bear Lake. He commuted between the two overnight in his own streetcar, which had been converted to a rolling apartment. In the stilted style of the time, the reporter tries to make it humorous.

While the action of the street railway company in putting on three through cars from Minneapolis to Stillwater on Sundays, with some running alternately with them only as far as Wildwood, was undoubtedly most reprehensible, as well as in direct violation of the company's St. Paul charter, there are worse things going on. These through cars relieve the congestion of the St. Paul travel to Wildwood and Stillwater.

But what will the Pioneer Press and its confreres say when they learn that the street railway is not only running through cars to Stillwater and Wildwood occasionally, but that it is actually running a through sleeping car every night from Lake Harriet to Wildwood?

This heinous offense is being committed under cover of night, but the facts have leaked out nevertheless. The sides of the car have been covered with great, flaming signs announcing in three colors that the Banda Rossa is making a superior article of music at Lake Harriet, and that there is fun to be had in large quantities at Wildwood. These deceptive signs are long and high, and they effectually conceal the character of the nefarious and charter-breaking sleeper.

But early this morning, just as the clocks were striking one, the sleeper stole cautiously out of the yards at Lake Harriet. It was soon under way and its crew of two determined men quickly had it skimming along over the shining rails on its way to Wildwood. Penetrating into the interior of the bedroom and fast asleep in a brass-mounted bedstead was the cherubic form of H. M. Barnet, concessionaire extraordinary at Lake Harriet, Como and Wildwood. Mr. Barnet has the refreshment privileges at these three famous street railway resorts and this sleeper is his private car, where he saves time by sleeping while traveling. He goes to bed at Lake Harriet every night, after a dip in the lake, and wakes up the next morning at Wildwood, three hours' ride away.

The sleeper is one of the old "whalebacks," which used to run on the steam motor line and some of which are now to be seen on the Minnehaha line. Mr. Barnet's time is valuable and he has a good deal of territory to cover in a day. So he besought General Manager Goodrich to let him have the ancient car so that he could have it fixed up as a traveling home. Mr. Goodrich readily consented and so the car was done off into a suite of rooms with every convenience necessary to make it habitable. The train crew is paid by Mr. Barnet and it takes his car out of the Lake Harriet yards every morning at 1 o'clock after he has retired for the night. The car reaches Wildwood at about 4 a. m. Mr. Barnet gets up in the morning whenever it suits him and the crew snooze peacefully until about 11, when they go out on an advertising tour of the streets of the two cities, arriving eventually at Lake Harriet along in the afternoon, ready to take Mr. Barnet, who has made the day trip back meanwhile in the ordinary way, to Wildwood the next morning.

"I sleep as sound as can be," said Mr. Barnet "in my odd sleeper. I open the windows fore and aft and there is always a fine breeze blowing through. As you see, I have my car comfortably furnished and I take real comfort in it and save no end of time as well."

More on TCRT's first African-American employees

-Aaron Isaacs

After writing the short piece about the first African-American motormen in the Fall 2019 issue, I wanted to zero in on who was really the first. Thankfully, the Minneapolis Spokesman, the African-American newspaper, is now searchable on the Minnesota Historical Society's website.

I knew that Twin City Rapid Transit had never hired a Black man to run streetcars until the end of World War II. When it finally happened in November 1945, it was newsworthy enough to rate a headline at the top of the front page. Here's the text.

Claude Mason on Job As Streetcar Operator From East Side Barns

The East Side Station of the Minneapolis Street Railway is putting democracy to work successfully and proving it can be done. Claude Mason, 3924 Fifth Avenue So., is now working out of the barns as a streetcar conductor. Having passed his conductor's operational probation period successfully, he will next turn to motorman's duties in order to qualify as an operator of a one man streetcar.

Mason, a graduate of Minneapolis Central High school, is 29 years old, married, and the father of two children, Carol Jean, 3 years, and John, five months. He also attended University of Minnesota. Mason went into training as a streetcar operator after he was laid off at the Twin Cities Ordnance plant where he drove an ammunition truck.

The story went on to say that the actual first Black employee was Sylvester Carter, hired in 1937 as a night car cleaner at North Side Station. By 1945 he was a day repairman at East Side Station. He was transferred to Nicollet station as a general car cleaner, then to East Side Station as a mechanic's helper; from there he went to the Duluth Avenue Station as a switchman. Then back to North Side as a night repairman, and then finally to East Side again as a day repairman. The article added, *He took each transfer when men with more seniority than he had refused to change stations even when it meant a promotion. He also works extra duty as a substitute conductor.*

Although he started as a cleaner on the night shift, that was not because of discrimination. The union contract required all new Mechanical Department employees to start as car cleaners. The newest hires went on the night shift because they lacked enough seniority to pick a day shift. With enough seniority they could bid to become mechanic's helpers and then mechanics. The requirement to start as a cleaner persisted well into the Metro Transit era. It was finally negotiated out of the contract because it prevented Metro Transit from hiring good mechanics.

Getting back to Claude Mason, he only ran streetcars until October 1946. His appointment card says he "Resigned to go into business for himself. This man's station and line record after his probation period was very good."

Junius Powell was the second Black motorman, hired November 1945. Like the group of returning veterans hired in 1947, he lived in St. Paul's Rondo neighborhood. He worked streetcars and buses until 1963 and his employment card says he was an "excellent employee".

The other 1947 hires were:

Alexander Jordan, who worked until 1959.

Readus Fletcher, until 1963.

Lyle Lasley, retired in 1976

William Massie, retired in 1982. His son then drove bus for Metro Transit.

Clinton (Clennie) Perry moved into the front office and retired in the 1970s.

Al Stewart moved into the Claim Department and retired in the 1970s.

Tower & Soudan Street Railway

-Leon Anderson, LakeVermillion.net

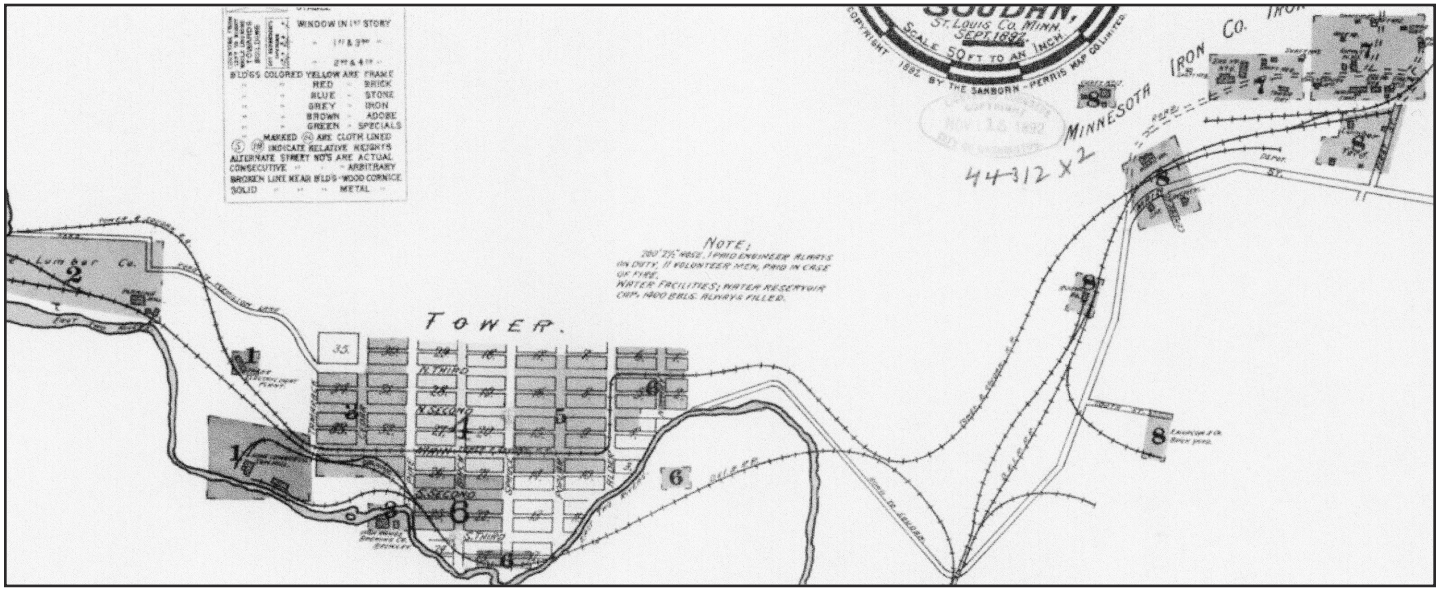
If you think the streetcar connecting International Falls and Ranier was obscure, consider the street railway between Tower and Soudan on the Vermillion iron range. It ran from 1891 to 1893.

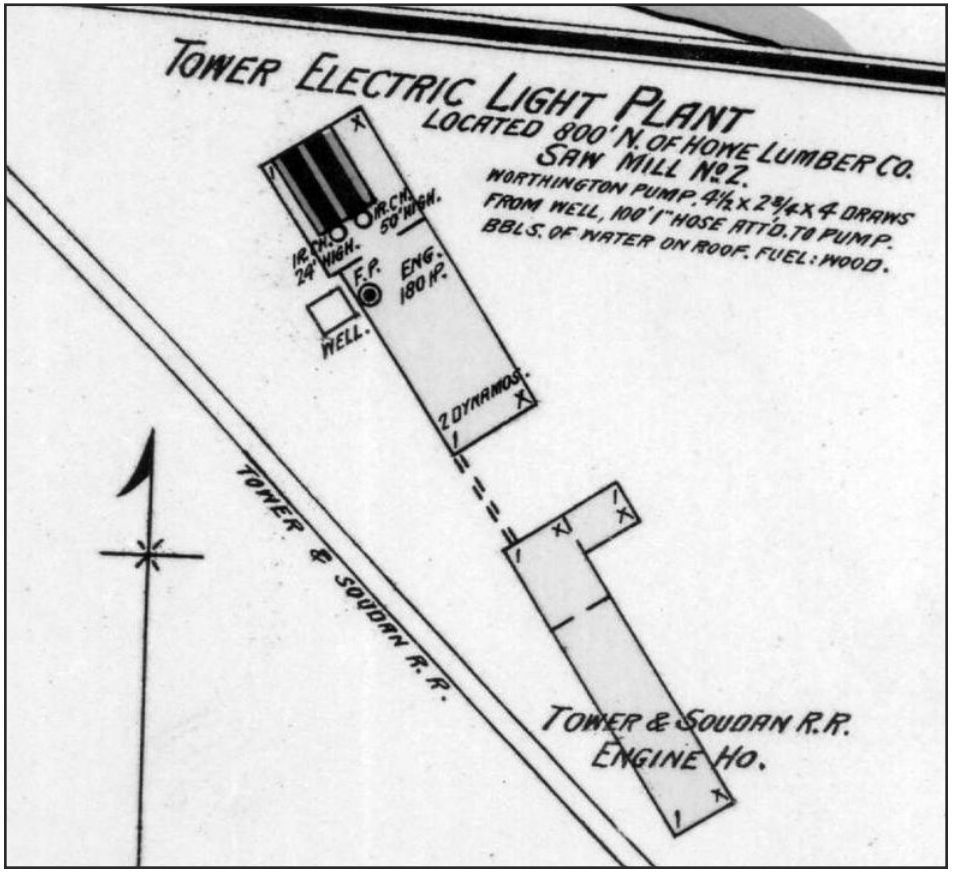
The Minnesota Iron Company's Soudan Iron mine is the oldest and deepest in Minnesota. The first crew of miners left Duluth in June 1882. Initial evacuations were underway when the town site of Tower was laid out in 1882 in anticipation of the iron mining industry.

The official opening of the mine was in 1884 with the first shipments of ore being delivered July 31st via a newly completed rail line to Two Harbors. This marked the beginning utilization of one of the richest iron ore deposits in the world. The first workings were open pits. Over time, the mine would include fifteen major open pits and shafts, with twenty other minor workings. By 1890, above ground mining ceased and all operations were underground. Eventually, the main shaft extended to a depth of almost 2,400 feet. The mine reached its peak production in 1892, shipping over 568,000 tons of high-grade ore and employing over 1,800 men. The mine produced over 17.9 million tons of ore during its operation.

As the mine grew, so did the communities of Tower and Soudan. Founded at the very edge of the mine, Soudan was a classic company town - the mining company and the community almost indistinguishable. The town began as two sites named Stone and Breitung, each named for a nearby ore pit. The company managed the settlement and built houses, a hospital, a community center, and a sawmill, as well as cleaned the streets and developed wells for clean water. Population was 1,000 in 1887 and almost 2,000 in 1888.

Tower grew independent of the mining company, but still existed to serve the mine and its workers. The City of Tower, incorporated on Nov. 11, 1884, is the oldest city north of Duluth, and grew with the success of





Above: This map shows the Tower & Soudan Street Railway's. It's the upper of the two railroad lines.
Left: This is the line's engine house, visible in the larger map just to the left of the town of Tower.
Both LakeVermillion.net collection.

the mine. In May of 1890 Tower had a population of about 3,000. By 1891 the population of Tower doubled to 6,000. But by 1892 the mining boom was over and the Tower population was 5,000 and declining.

For a short time before the turn of the 20th century, Tower and Soudan had a streetcar. The streetcar ran from the sawmill and box factory on Mill Point, through Tower along Main Street, then out on 3rd Street North on the east end of town, behind where St. Martin's Catholic Church now stands. It then followed along the current Highway 1 route on the north side, then south for a bit along the Junction Road's railroad grade, and then up into Soudan between the former hospital and the Soudan Mine, where the depot was originally located.

The Tower & Soudan Street Railway Company came to be in December of 1889, filing its articles of incorporation. It was given $6,000 in capital from a city bond and was contracted to run for 20 years.

In 1891 the streetcar line replaced the Tower Stage Line which since 1888 had provided the only means of public transportation between Tower and the mines. The streetcar was pulled by a small steam engine over three miles of narrow gauge track. On Tower's main street regular stops were made at every corner. The company was owned and operated by Charles Trengrove, a former copper miner from Anaconda, Montana. Trengrove's streetcar made 10 trips per day and ran seven days per week until the 1893 mine closing.

It seems that there were some struggles with securing the proposed route – a blurb from the Duluth Herald mentioned that the company will tunnel through to its destination if it needs to. After months of deliberation, the Duluth and Iron Range Railroad agreed to let the streetcar's tracks cross theirs.

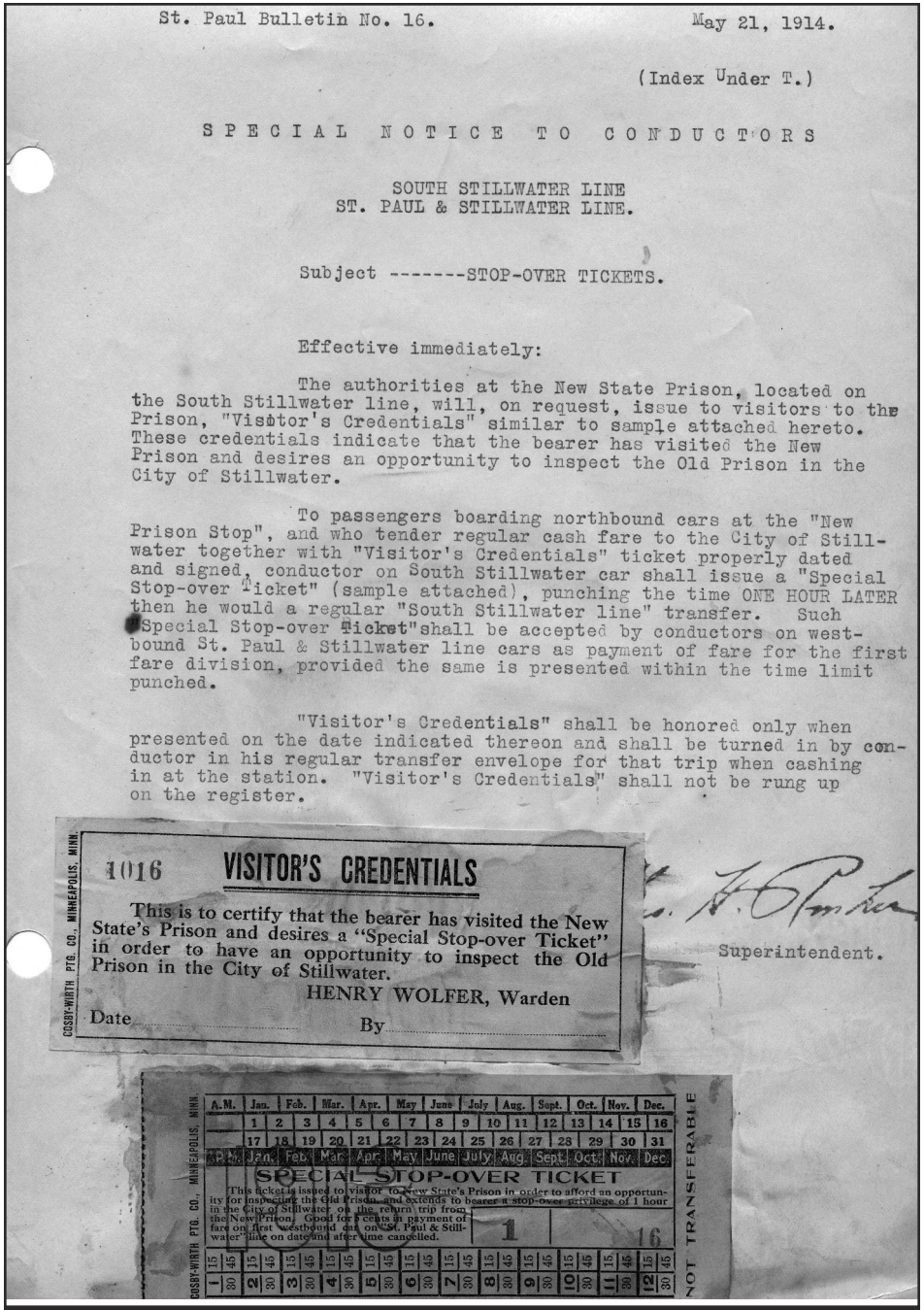
An early power plant, and also the streetcar barn, was built along its track to the northwest of Tower. According to the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company's maps, it was directly west from North Third Street. It's unclear whether it was for the streetcar only, or if it generated power for Tower too.

Legal issues beset the company throughout its short lifetime. A man named Aaron Wickstrom sustained an injury upon being thrown from a rail car, insisting he was damaged to the tune of $13,000 in what appears to be a case of insurance fraud. The case was active in the courts for two years, and eventually Wickstrom was awarded $1500.

The financial panic of 1893 resulted in the closing of the Soudan Mine. According to the Vermillion Iron Journal 8-10-1893: "Minnesota Iron Company has suspended all mining operations and its machinery is idle. 1,100 men were discharged with 300 being retained." The impact on the community was profound. Within a few months its [Soudan] population dropped to a few hundred people.

In 1896, the city of Tower sued to have the company's franchise terminated and to decide the fate of the remaining assets. According to the Duluth Herald in 1896, "It ran spasmodically until March 4, 1894, when it expired, and it is now one of the deadest roads in the country."

There is little trace left of the route. After the company was dissolved, a section of the route between Tower and the Soudan Mine was absorbed by Tower Junction and Soudan Mine railroad operations. The rest of the route was left to be reclaimed by nature.



St. Paul Bulletin No. 16. May 21, 1914.

(Index Under T.)

SPECIAL NOTICE TO CONDUCTORS

SOUTH STILLWATER LINE
ST. PAUL & STILLWATER LINE.

Subject -------STOP-OVER TICKETS.

Effective immediately:

The authorities at the New State Prison, located on the South Stillwater line, will, on request, issue to visitors to the Prison, "Visitor's Credentials" similar to sample attached hereto. These credentials indicate that the bearer has visited the New Prison and desires an opportunity to inspect the Old Prison in the City of Stillwater.

To passengers boarding northbound cars at the "New Prison Stop", and who tender regular cash fare to the City of Stillwater together with "Visitor's Credentials" ticket properly dated and signed, conductor on South Stillwater car shall issue a "Special Stop-over Ticket" (sample attached), punching the time ONE HOUR LATER then he would a regular "South Stillwater line" transfer. Such "Special Stop-over Ticket" shall be accepted by conductors on westbound St. Paul & Stillwater line cars as payment of fare for the first fare division, provided the same is presented within the time limit punched.

"Visitor's Credentials" shall be honored only when presented on the date indicated thereon and shall be turned in by conductor in his regular transfer envelope for that trip when cashing in at the station. "Visitor's Credentials" shall not be rung up on the register.

Superintendent.

COSBY-WIRTH PTG. CO., MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

1016 VISITOR'S CREDENTIALS

This is to certify that the bearer has visited the New State's Prison and desires a "Special Stop-over Ticket" in order to have an opportunity to inspect the Old Prison in the City of Stillwater.

HENRY WOLFER, Warden

Date ..... By .....

COSBY-WIRTH PTG. CO., MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

A.M. Jan. Feb. Mar. Apr. May June July Aug. Sept. Oct. Nov. Dec.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31
P.M. Jan. Feb. Mar. Apr. May June July Aug. Sept. Oct. Nov. Dec.

SPECIAL STOP-OVER TICKET

This ticket is issued to visitor to New State's Prison in order to afford an opportunity for inspecting the Old Prison, and extends to bearer a stop-over privilege of 1 hour in the City of Stillwater on the return trip from the New Prison. Good for 5 cents in payment of fare on first westbound car on St. Paul & Stillwater line on date and after time cancelled.

1 16

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NOT TRANSFERABLE

Here's a rare document from our collection. In 1914 the new Stillwater Prison opened. This TCRT bulletin explains how passengers could use this special stop-over ticket to visit both the new and old prisons without paying an extra streetcar fare.

Some Star-Tribune streetcar stories

10-22-23

Chief Frank Brunskill intends to rid his police force of "automobile-riding" patrolmen. Patrolmen who have been riding to work in their own cars must hereafter use the street cars, or, if they prefer, walk. "Owing to the large number of complaints against officers driving their own cars while on duty," the order said, "hereafter all uniformed officers are required to keep out of their cars while coming to and from their respective beats." Policemen owning cars interpreted the order as meaning that they may drive to the precinct station when reporting for work, but must leave their machines at the precinct station in going to the beat. It is said that some of the beats in the outlying stations are many blocks from the precinct stations and that some of the patrolmen have adopted the custom of going to their beats in automobiles. When they reach the bounds of their territory they alight from the machine and cover the beat on foot.

11-4-25

Andrew Edwardson will spend the next 60 days in the workhouse because he knocked down a pedestrian with his car, ran away from the accident and then told the judge he was not a drinking man. Edwardson's number was taken by a trolley motorman who saw the accident and pursued the fleeing driver in his streetcar, much to the chagrin of passengers who wanted to get off.

3-7-26

"Bill the Motorman" will give the traffic talk from WCCO at 10:05 pm Thursday. His subject will be "A Streetcar Can't Dodge".

3-8-26

After his automobile struck a streetcar at Broadway and Jefferson, Jack Hummel was chased three blocks through snow drifts and over icy streets Sunday night and captured by members of the crew, who wanted to get his name so they could make a report.

8-8-26

Business has followed the street car line. The largest retail centers are to be found at the streetcar intersections. Among the busiest is West Broadway and Emerson avenues north, where the count of the Minneapolis Street Railway Co. shows that 28,000 people are transported to and from the intersection every day.

8-28-26

Automobiles in passing street car safety zone signs may go either to the right of them or follow the tracks to the left—provided they leave room enough for persons standing within the zone. It was also pointed out by the police that automobiles in passing safety zones while street cars are taking on or discharging passengers must drive "slowly and carefully".

9-3-26

Frank Johnson, 33 years old, was killed by electricity during a rainstorm Thursday afternoon when he slipped from the roof of a streetcar and came in contact with a live wire. He had been making some repairs and the car was in motion as he inspected his work. He lost his balance when the car roof became slippery.

6-30-28

John Bartness was crossing Washington Avenue at 2nd Avenue S. when a Minneapolis-St. Paul streetcar came around the corner. The car trolley jumped the wire, and on the rebound the trolley became loosened from its fastenings and fell to the ground. The falling trolley struck Bartness across the head. Physicians fear he cannot live.

8-7-28

One more advantage of a 'city of lakes" is revealed in the choice of the Northern Airlines of Lake Calhoun as a landing "field" for Duluth-bound planes. Here is a beautiful airport, not way off in the corner of the city, but set in the midst of its resident section and but 15 minutes from the loop district. It is readily accessible by bus and streetcar lines.

5-26-29

Riding on a Camden car, Eric Johnson decided he would like a breath of fresh air and attempted to lower the window into the box below the sill. The window lived up to best traditions of its kind and refused to budge. Becoming exasperated, he gave one tug too hard, the sash came loose, dropped and fractured the third finger of his right hand.

7-24-30

With the Streetcar Baseball League's schedule near completion, the North station nine still clings to its lead. Only a single game separates North from the Snelling and Lake stations. In Thursday morning's contests, North plays East at Parade 2, Lake Street opposes Nicollet at Parade 1 and Duluth meets Snelling at Dunning field.

7-16-31

Will the streetcar riding public please permit the motormen and conductors to take off their coats during the heat wave? This, in substance, was the anguished inquiry to the Minneapolis Star today by a sweating—and anonymous motorman. "Other men are taking their coats off," he wailed. "The bus drivers don't wear coats. Policemen don't wear coats. Bankers took their coats off during the last heat wave. Nobody wears coats now but the streetcar boys. Something oughta be done." It seems the streetcar company is traditionally opposed to coatless motormen and conductors.

8-20-32

No more will students in the University of Minnesota business school have to halt their work while the inter-campus streetcar screeches around the wye behind the building and starts noisily on its return trip to the farm campus. For the wye is being removed. When students return to classes in the fall, they will find the inter-campus car line has been changed so that it loops in front of the business school and the Minnesota union. This was done to eliminate the noise that formerly disturbed classes.

1-2-33

Streetcar traffic was tied up for a time along the right of way alongside Lakewood Cemetery early Sunday when a motorist and his party mistook the right of way for a highway. The automobile traveled from 31st Street to beyond 36th Street, where it became stuck fast.

2-8-33

Automobiles have been abandoned in favor of streetcars by thousands of Minneapolis workers during the cold spell, with the result that the Minneapolis Street Railway has been forced to put on additional cars during rush hours.

4-1-33

Passengers on the Bryant-Johnson streetcar were given a bad scare when the car ran over a package of potash and sulphur, which exploded. It apparently had been placed there by April Fool's Day pranksters. Only a portion of the explosive was touched off, and police reported that had the entire package exploded, the car might have been lifted from the tracks.

4-2-33

The St. Paul fire department kept an appointment Saturday to meet a fire. When the fire started about noon in a streetcar at 7th and Robert, the operator of the car called the fire department. "But we can't wait here, we're blocking traffic," he explained. "Go to 8th and Cedar (on the seldom used shortline turn loop) and we'll bring the fire around there." The appointment was kept by Squad #1. When the streetcar and its fire arrived, squad men put out the blaze before any material damage was done.

5-3-33

A Braille streetcar map of St. Paul for the blind was created. The map is now in the MSM collection, displayed in the Russell Olson Library.

8-24-33

Feasibility of a new plan for paving streets upon which the streetcar lines run, with the city to do all the paving and then assess the streetcar company for its share of the paving, will be studied by the roads and bridges committee of the city council. The plan would replace that of the city paving its portion of the street and the traction company paving between its tracks.

8-31-33

From a letter to the editor during the Great Depression. "The city is feeding hundreds of ex-streetcar men. Hundreds of men are working only two or three days a week (for the streetcar company) who have 14 years or more standing."

6-24-34

One of the 53 persons hurt in a St. Paul runaway streetcar accident was still in the hospital as police began an investigation of circumstances attending the car's rush through the loop.

About 65 passengers were aboard the Hamline-South Robert car when at Summit Avenue and Wabasha Street it hit a sand truck. The truck was hurled to one side. The front end of the streetcar was bashed in and its air brake hose severed. Its controls out of commission, the car headed (*downhill*) for the loop and hit another truck, this one loaded with coal, and two automobiles before it was stopped 10 blocks farther on.

Injured in the collision, motorman Warner tried frantically to apply the air brakes. They would not take hold. Neither could Warner shut off the power. He stayed in the cab as the car rolled down hill out of control, shouting to pedestrians and motorists to get out of the way. Several frightened passengers leaped through streetcar windows to safety. Some of those were among the injured.

E. J. Bisson, a passing pedestrian, observed the car out of control. He sprinted behind it and managed to grasp the trolley rope from the rear. He was dragged a block before he was able to yank the trolley off the wire, thus shutting off the power. His heroism cost him some bruises. Only a derailment at 5th and Wabasha stopped the car.

3-4-35

Streetcar traffic was hampered today by ice forming on trolley wires, but cars were experiencing less difficulty than Sunday night, when they were running as much as 90 minutes late. The arcing of the current between the trolley wheels and wires set up beautiful electrical displays, but made the cars run jerkily. In some instances, wheels were removed and the trolley fork used to pick up the power and at the same time scrape the ice.

4-27-35

Three year old Donald Harding went shopping with his mother at a store near a streetcar stop. The boy wandered out of the store, and spying an empty streetcar, clambered aboard. Grasping the air brake handle, Donald released the brake and the car started down the hill. His mother missed him and walked out of the store just as the car moved by. In a futile attempt to pull the boy from the car, the mother broke in a window, suffering severe cuts on her arm. The ride ended a moment after the car had jumped the track when a 17-year old boy, George Jelinek, jumped onto the "cow catcher", broke in a window and applied the brake. The car, with doors open, had been left standing by the motorman while he went into a nearby business establishment.

8-29-35

Letter to the editor. It is a laugh how WDGY asks its listeners to write in and complain about the poor reception caused by the streetcars. WDGY is so powerful on our radio that it drowns out WTCN and even KSTP. Streetcars alone are not responsible for the static. There are hundreds of power machines that cause static more readily than streetcars. We live right on the Chicago carline and when WDGY is on there is not any disturbance.

4-29-38

A streetcar lost a race with death after running to Lake and Hennepin at high speed and no stops. Mrs. Anna Birgelen, 69, was stricken with a heart attack near the lake and the motorman "gunned" the car to Lake and Hennepin where first aid was obtained. When the ambulance arrived, however, Mrs. Birgelen was dead.

1-31-39

UofM Co-ed survey

Does it embarrass you to ride on a streetcar with your date? 39 no and 8 yes.

5-18-40

The odyssey of three youngsters who yesterday captured a work car at Snelling and University Avenues, was a destructive one. Attempting to drive the car, they smashed into several trolleys parked in the yard. The boys, two 14 and one 15, are held for juvenile officers.

1-22-41

Awakened by the motorman after he had fallen asleep on a streetcar, Edward Ehrman, 25, woke up swinging—and smashed one of the trolley windows. He was given a suspended 30-day workhouse sentence in St. Paul on condition he pay for the window glass.

3-4-41

A bill to compel streetcars to be equipped with stop (brake) lights was killed by the house committee today. Mechanical difficulties of putting a stop sign on an air brake make it impractical, a street railway official said.

C'MON OVER!

See the St. Paul Winter Carnival

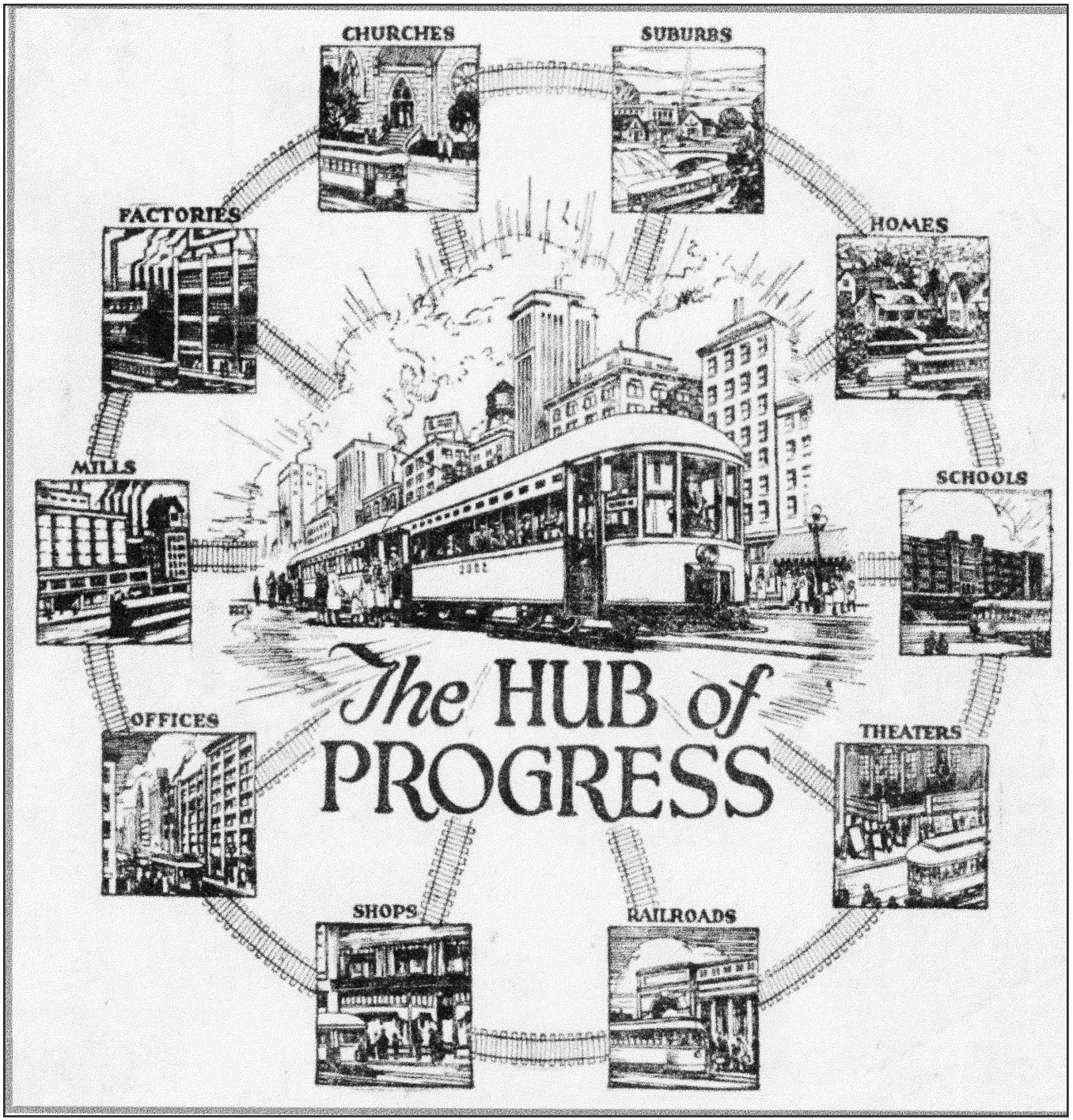
GRAND PARADE

Saturday, February 1

Special street car and bus service will be provided to all downtown review points.

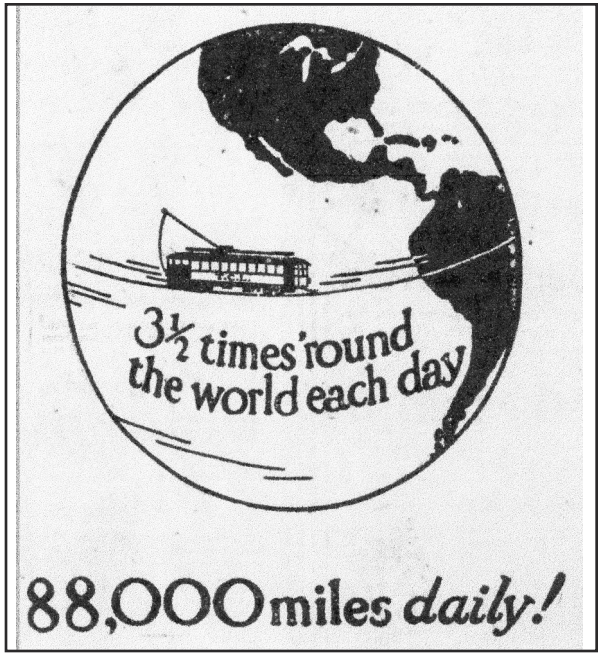
No private motor cars will be permitted within the Assembly Area and Parade Route, by order of the St. Paul Police Department.

For comfort, convenience and safety . . . go the sensible way tomorrow . . . by street car or bus.



"Where's Your New Car, Bill?"

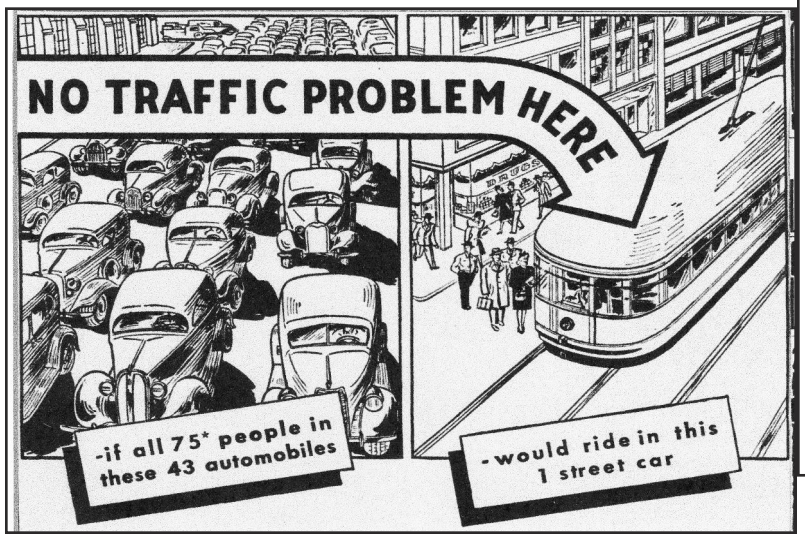
"It's in my garage—where it belongs! I'm saving money now by riding Street Cars and Buses for business...and saving my car by using it for recreation only!"



88,000 miles *daily!*

Street Cars Supply Buying Power!

WHAT *happens to every dollar taken in by your Street Car Company—Where does it go?*



On Exhibition...

Take a FREE RIDE on America's Most Modern Street Car

The Twin City Lines takes great pleasure in inviting you to inspect the new street cars which are soon to be added in quantity to the Twin City Transit System.

Take a Free Ride Around the Loop THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19th - 12 to 2:30 p. m. Board the car at any point on the following streets: Starting at Washington and 2nd Avenue South, up 2nd to 6th. West on 6th to 1st Avenue North. North to Washington. East to 2nd Avenue South.

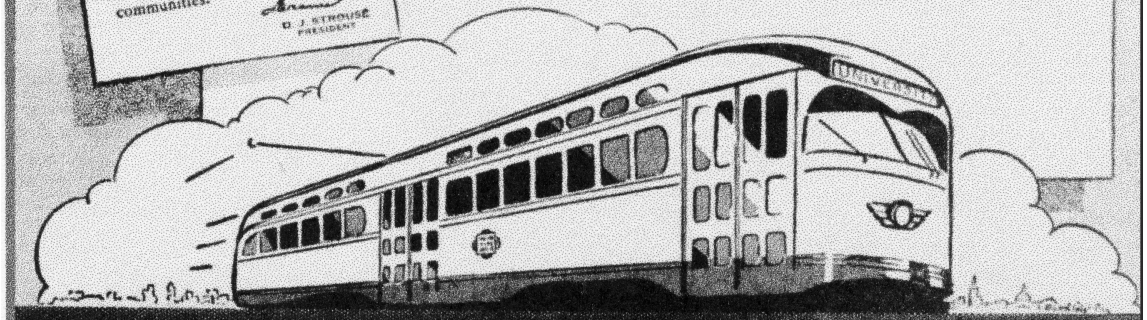
TWIN CITY LINES' POLICY

TO PROVIDE more comfortable and convenient service and to do so with safety and courtesy.

TO ACCOMPLISH THIS PURPOSE: We have commenced a modernization program to assure the finest equipment and plant available . . . estimated to cost $20,000,000 and to be completed as soon as possible. Twin City Lines is an organization of 2500 employees, neighbors of yours and good citizens who recognize their responsibility to serve the public graciously and well, and it is our earnest desire and pride, and shall be our constant effort that the service shall be a credit to these communities.

O. J. STROUSE
PRESIDENT

These street cars are part of a $20,000,000 modernization program designed to give the Twin Cities the finest transportation system in America. We would like to have you see them so that you will appreciate not only the obvious features of distinctive appearance, convenience and speed, but also the less obvious qualities that contribute to your comfort, safety and to greater efficiency in service.



THE TWIN CITY LINES

Here's another view of the 50th and France wye before it was moved to 51st Street in 1934. Lee Brothers photo, Minnesota Historical Society collection.

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

PO Box 16509
Minneapolis, MN 55416-0509
www.TrolleyRide.org

August 2021

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